



Satellite image with enhanced low cloud-top temperatures (degrees C) for 7:15 a.m. EST (NOAA)

Agricultural Weather Highlights - Friday - February 15, 2002

- ***In the West***, warm, dry weather in ***California and Arizona*** favors spring fieldwork and vegetable and small grain development. Meanwhile, high-elevation snow packs remain near to above normal for mid-February in the ***Northwest*** and significantly below normal elsewhere in the region.
- ***On the Plains***, minimal snow cover and mild, dry, breezy conditions continue to adversely affect drought-stressed winter wheat from ***Montana to western Nebraska***. Wheat is benefiting from recent soil moisture improvements across the ***southern half of the Plains***, but will soon need additional moisture.
- ***In the Corn Belt***, a mild weather pattern continues to permit an unusual degree of outdoor activity. The November-January period was the warmest on record in ***Minnesota, Iowa, and Wisconsin***, and today's ***Midwestern*** high temperatures are forecast to range from 40 to 55 degrees F.
- ***In the South***, warm, dry weather favors spring planting preparations and pasture and winter grain development. Areas from the ***Appalachians to the East Coast*** continue to suffer from the effects of long-term drought, including below-normal reservoir storage and subsoil moisture shortages.

Outlook: A weak storm system is forecast to cross the ***East*** during the weekend, followed by a stronger system in the ***West***. Early next week, the latter storm is forecast to produce beneficial snowfall in the ***West***, then trigger heavy showers and thunderstorms across the ***South***. Meanwhile, rain and snow showers are expected to develop across the ***Midwest***. The NWS 6-10 day outlook for February 20-24 calls for cool weather in the ***Northwest*** and near- to above-normal temperatures across the remainder of the U.S. Mostly dry weather is forecast across the ***Plains and Southwest***, but wet weather is expected in the ***Northwest*** and in most areas from the ***Mississippi River to the East Coast***. While the wet conditions will be favorable in most areas, portions of the ***lower Mississippi Valley*** may experience a return to lowland flooding.

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